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**CHAPTER 308. STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EMPLOYMENT**  
**(To Be Used With 5 CFR 213.3202 (a) & (b))****1. SCOPE**

a. **Coverage.** This chapter applies to appointments of students under the Student Educational Employment Program (SEEP). (See 5 CFR 213.3202(a), covering the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP), and 5 CFR 213.3202(b), covering the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).) All student employment under SEEP must be carried out in accordance with a written agreement between a VA establishment and an educational institution.

b. **Exclusions.** This chapter does not apply to: enrollees in manpower or education programs hosted at no cost to VA or on a cost reimbursable basis; volunteers; WOC (without compensation) employees; or students enrolled in baccalaureate curricula appointed under authorities other than 5 CFR 213.3202(a) and 5 CFR 213.3202(b).

**2. REFERENCES**

- a. Executive Order 12015, as amended, dated November 7, 1996.
- b. 5 CFR 213.3202(a) and (b).

**3. POLICY**

All VA establishments are encouraged to participate in the Student Educational Employment Program (SEEP), especially when such participation will contribute to VA-wide employment objectives or facilitate recruitment for shortage category positions at individual field facilities. Facility use of the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) feature allowing noncompetitive conversion to competitive positions is an effective means of furthering equal employment opportunity objectives. Particular attention will be given to providing opportunities for Vietnam era veterans, disabled veterans and students with disabilities.

**4. SELECTION AND ELIGIBILITY**

Field facilities employing students have final responsibility for determining eligibility and selecting students recommended by schools. There must be a current position description for any position occupied by a SEEP student except for the positions of Resident in Healthcare Administration and Healthcare Administration Interns and Trainees which are excluded from this requirement by section 5102(16) of Title 5, U.S.C.

**5. WORKING AGREEMENT**

There will be a written working agreement between the field facility and each participating school. The authority to enter into and sign a working agreement is reserved to the facility Director. A sample baccalaureate degree Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) agreement is contained in appendix A to this chapter. This sample agreement may be modified, as appropriate, for a

Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) baccalaureate degree program and for SCEP or STEP professional degree, graduate degree, associate degree, vocational/technical certificate, and high school (or equivalent) diploma programs.

## 6. RETENTION AND RELEASE

a. **Students on SCEP Appointments.** In the case of SCEP students under 5 CFR 213.3202(b) only, the student's first work-education period will be considered the screening period during which every effort should be made to determine whether the student demonstrates the potential to succeed in the program. Near the end of this work-education period, and of each succeeding work-education period, an appraisal will be made of the student's performance. Based on this appraisal, each Service or Division Chief-level manager supervising a SCEP student will send to the Director, or to the Human Resources Management Officer where designated, a recommendation that the student be retained or released from employment. Recommendations for promotion, if appropriate, should also be made at this time. When the student's retention or release has been determined, both the student and the school's SEEP coordinator should be promptly notified. The appraisal made at or near the end of the final work-education period must contain a recommendation as to whether the SCEP student should be converted to a competitive position.

b. **Students on STEP Appointments.** While the screening and evaluation of students on STEP appointments under 5 CFR 213.3202(a) need not be as structured as for SCEP students, supervisors should closely follow each student's progress and provide necessary counseling and guidance to ensure that the work-education period is a productive experience for both the student and VA.

## 7. EMPLOYMENT AFTER GRADUATION

a. **Students on SCEP Appointments.** A SCEP student who meets all the requirements set forth in 5 CFR 213.3202(b) may be converted noncompetitively to a career-conditional or career appointment, as appropriate. As early as practicable before graduation, the Human Resources Management Officer should provide the student with all available information avenues concerning employment opportunities in VA. These may include contacting the appropriate Headquarters program official, checking lists of vacancies published by Headquarters, and contacting other VA installations at which the student is interested in being employed.

b. **Students on STEP Appointments.** Students appointed under 5 CFR 213.3202(a) who complete their STEP program to the satisfaction of the employing VA establishment may be considered for career-conditional or career appointment as appropriate, through the normal competitive process.

c. **Consideration for Appointment.** There is no mandatory obligation on the part of VA establishments to appoint students who have completed programs under these two authorities.

## **8. STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EMPLOYMENT LIAISON**

The Human Resources Management Officer or designee at each VA establishment employing SEEP students will serve as liaison with participating schools on matters pertaining to the Student Educational Employment Program. This person will keep informed of developments in the area of student educational employment both in the public and private sectors.

## **9. PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The SEEP program will be reviewed for compliance with Federal civil service regulations and VA policies as part of the human resources management evaluations conducted by Headquarters. In addition, Human Resources Management Officers should periodically review the program to ensure compliance with regulations and policies and its effectiveness in meeting field facility staffing needs.

## **10. FUNDING**

VA establishments participating in this program will normally use available facility funds and ceiling. However, the Veterans Health Administration has annually announced that VHA facilities may submit requests for headquarters-level support through appropriate channels if funds are not available locally, for the establishment of a program or the continuation or expansion of an existing program which is clearly in the interest of VA.



**APPENDIX A. SAMPLE BACCALAUREATE STUDENT CAREER  
EXPERIENCE PROGRAM AGREEMENT**

**STUDENT CAREER EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (SCEP) AGREEMENT BETWEEN**

\_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as "school," and \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as "VA."  
(college/university) (VA facility)

In accordance with regulations set forth by the United States Office of Personnel Management and policies of the Department of Veterans Affairs, this agreement provides for the employment of students in attendance at \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_  
(college/university) (VA facility)

under a Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) of the Federal Student Educational Employment Program.

**I. NATURE OF THE PROGRAM**

This Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) provides for study supplemented by study-related work experience. SCEP participants pursue a baccalaureate curriculum in which the work experience is related to the student's academic/career goals. This work experience must be carried out in accordance with a planned schedule. SCEP participants who successfully complete this program may be considered for conversion to regular (Career-Conditional, or if appropriate Career) appointments in VA.

**II. RESPONSIBILITIES OF VA**

VA will appoint a member of its staff to serve as liaison with the school in all matters pertaining to the SCEP. VA will keep the school informed of work experience opportunities as they arise. VA has final responsibility for determining eligibility for employment and for selection of students to be appointed to the program. Selection will be made from eligible candidates referred by the school. VA will handle all personnel processing involved with the appointment of students.

Each student's work experience program will be carefully planned to enrich the learning experience and orient the student to the occupation and the work setting. Individual work experience programs will be monitored to ensure that the student is receiving the maximum benefit from the work experience. VA will keep the school informed of each student's progress and will notify the school toward the end of each work-education period of its intention to release or retain the student.

### III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL

The school will appoint a member of its staff to serve as liaison with VA in all matters pertaining to the SCEP. The school will inform prospective candidates of SCEP opportunities with VA and will refer candidates, including all qualified honorably discharged veterans, who express an interest in being considered for SCEP positions with VA. When candidates are referred, the school will provide information on each student which will be helpful to VA in making a selection and which the school is authorized to release. The school will keep VA informed of any changes in academic status which may affect the student's participation in the SCEP. In addition, the school will make every effort to strengthen the relationship between study and work assignments.

### IV. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for a SCEP position, a student:

- a. Must meet all eligibility requirements referenced in 5 CFR 213.3202(b) on the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).
- b. Must be in attendance at and enrolled in a baccalaureate curriculum and recommended for appointment by the school.
- c. Must be a citizen of the United States, or lawfully admitted as a permanent resident or otherwise authorized to be employed and paid.
- d. May be the relative of an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs only if permitted by 5 CFR 213.3202(b)(7) and 5 CFR Part 310.
- e. Must maintain, based on a 4 point scale, a 2.0 average in courses in the major field of study and in the overall academic program. The student's overall record must indicate the potential for successful completion of all requirements for graduation.

### V. GRADE AND PROMOTION

SCEP students may be appointed to positions at grades GS-2 through GS-5, depending upon qualifications. No initial appointment may be made at the GS-5 level. Students who meet qualification standards and whose performance justifies advancement may be promoted up to grade GS-5.

### VI. WORK AND SCHOOL SCHEDULES

Individual work schedules will be arranged for each student employed under this agreement. Work schedules will be arranged to avoid interfering with the student's academic schedule and performance, so as to facilitate timely educational program completion while also satisfying all



requirements for conversion to career-conditional appointment (or career, if appropriate), as specified in section IX of this agreement.

During non-work periods, students will be placed in a leave-without-pay status.

## **VII. PAY AND BENEFITS**

Students will be paid the salary to which their grade and step entitles them under the current General Schedule salary scale. They are entitled to all Federal benefits for which they qualify. Annual leave, sick leave and paid holidays will also be granted in accordance with the regulations.<sup>1</sup>

## **VIII. TRIAL PERIOD AND PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

The student's first work-education period will be considered a trial period during which the student's progress will be closely observed. Before the end of this period, the student's performance will be appraised. Based on this appraisal and the Service/Division Chief-level manager's recommendation, VA will decide whether to retain or release the student. Both the student and the school will be notified immediately of this decision. In the case of release, the reasons will be provided to both parties.

The decision to retain the student will be reconsidered during each work-education period based on a current appraisal of performance.

## **IX. CONVERSION TO CAREER-CONDITIONAL APPOINTMENT (OR CAREER, IF APPROPRIATE)**

A SCEP student may be converted non-competitively to a career-conditional appointment (or career, if appropriate) to a GS-5 or GS-7 position in the field of work in which the student's training is received provided the following conditions are met:

- a. The student meets the appropriate qualification standards.
- b. VA recommends conversion.
- c. The student has successfully completed all requirements for a bachelor's degree within the preceding 120 days.
- d. The student has completed the appropriate amount of SCEP work experience (640 hours minimum) as described in 5 CFR 213.3202(b)(11)(B).

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<sup>1</sup>*If the field facility plans to pay educational expenses under conditions specified in 5 USC chapter 41 and 5 CFR Part 410, a short statement to this effect should be included.*

e. The student is a citizen of the United States and meets the employment of relatives requirements on the date conversion is recommended.

#### **X. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Selection of students to participate in this Student Career Experience Program will be made without regard to race, color, sex, age (except for statutory limitations), marital status, national origin, religious or political affiliation, or nondisqualifying handicap.

This agreement will remain in effect subject to annual review and renewal by both VA and the school. It will become void if no students from the school are employed under the provisions hereof within a twelve (12) month period.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE:**

Approved:

By \_\_\_\_\_

Title

For \_\_\_\_\_  
(college/university)

Approved:

By \_\_\_\_\_

Title

For \_\_\_\_\_  
(VA facility)